

MFI 2013: “One-Week Adrenaline Shot” for Urban Forestry

by Owen Croy, MFI Teaching Cadre, Manager of Parks for the City of Surrey, British Columbia



MFI takes place in Lied Lodge on Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Photo by Graham Herbst

The 2013 Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) was held February 17-22, 2013 in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Thirty participants gathered at the incomparable Lied Lodge and Conference Center for high-level training that focussed on growing leaders in the profession of municipal forestry. Attendees were challenged to “think outside the bark” as they engaged in this professional development opportunity.

Attendees at the 2013 MFI came from towns ranging in population from as small as 4,000 to major metropolitan areas of more than 8 million. Not only did attendees come from across the continental USA and Canada, one intrepid MFler travelled all the way from Brazil to learn, share and develop more skills in the specialized and challenging field of urban forestry. Among the participants were city foresters, consulting arborists specializing in delivering services to cities, state urban foresters, representatives of non-profit organizations

that work with cities, and others involved in municipal forestry operations.

The class of 2013 was a very thoughtful group who shared many excellent insights with fellow participants and the instructional team. There was over 400 years of urban forestry experience present between the class and the instructors, so attendees couldn't help but soak up great tips that will help them move their own programs forward.

TreePhilly Program Manager Erica Smith said, “*I am incredibly inspired by the passion and dedication I've observed in the Cadre and other attendees of MFI. I am new to the field of urban forestry, and being here at MFI has not only solidified my decision to get into the field, but it has also given me the skills and support system to contribute in meaningful ways and have the confidence to do so.*”



Class of 2013 MFI students rise to the demanding pace of the training. Photo by Paul Ries



MFI gives participants a chance to practice public speaking skills in a supportive environment. Photo by Paul Ries

John Rosenow, Founder and President of the Arbor Day Foundation, joined the group for an evening in which he shared his insights on the development of urban forestry and his thoughts on the great things to come for those who stay involved in this sector over the next decade. On another evening, Luiz Octavio de Lima Pedreira from Brazil gave a terrific slide show in which he showcased the outstanding urban forestry program in Rio de Janeiro.

The weather started out balmy in Nebraska, giving people an opportunity to walk outdoors during breaks and after classes ended, enjoying the



The MFI 2013 class takes a well-deserved break with a tour of the historic grounds of Arbor Day Farm. Photo by Graham Herbst

splendid grounds of the Arbor Day Farm. However, being Nebraska in winter, Mother Nature showed her temperamental side and provided a good snow storm before the week was out, allowing fine snow angels to be crafted by some very hardy souls.

The class of 2013 came away from MFI energized and ready to tackle important issues in their municipal forestry programs. Matthew Stephens summed up the sentiments of many of the attendees when he said, *"MFI is an amazing one-week adrenaline shot for your urban forestry program!"* Our congratulations to this impressive group of graduates. 🌿



MFI Peer Learning Groups get lively as they work through scenarios together. Photo by Paul Ries



Congrats, MFI Class of 2013! Photo by Paul Ries